1: Coon E-5 (1926-1927) 1931 MX3 Rif MX3

CHAPTER V

MATERIAL CULTURE (CONTINUED)

METAL WORK

326 METAL workers may be divided into three classes: ironworkers or blacksmiths, who are subjected to social restrictions, JEWS, and gunsmiths.

●325 None of these metal workers know the art of extracting metals from their ores — all the raw material used in the Rif, Senhaja, and Ghomara in recent times has been brought in from outside.[1] Thus, using smelting as the criterion, one might say that these people are not in an age of metal, despite the fact that they use metal tools exclusively. This observation is doubly true when one considers that all the metal workers, except the gunsmiths, are counted as outsiders and immigrants.

The blacksmiths use double bellows of goat-skin bags, which they work up and down with sticks. These bellows, called *tahanut*, must not be confused with the *arrabos*, the bellows of European fireplace type now made in Taghzuth and copied from those made in Meknes and Fez. The blacksmith works over a charcoal fire, quickened by means of these bellows: he heats his metal until it is red hot and then forges it on an anvil, called *er minsbuth*, which consists merely of an iron stake driven into the ground (unless he has had the good fortune to buy a European anvil). All iron is forged, none is cast; in fact, the only metal melted and cast is lead, used for bullets. The Riffian smiths are, however, able to perform one feat of considerable difficulty: they weld steel edges into soft iron implements, 325 177 an art unknown, I believe, to the Negroes of Central Africa, from whom, judging by tradition, the physical type of the smiths, and the types of implements, modern North African metallurgy was borrowed. The Vandals, according to Procopius,[2] are supposed to have shown the North Africans the secret of steel-working, whence the smiths may have obtained this technique, if they did not obtain it later from Jews or Arabs.

326 412 439 The blacksmiths make hoes, sickles, ploughshares, pruning knives, knives, shears, scissors, axes, adzes, chisels, hammers, and horseshoes. Such tools as files, vises, saws, planes, awls, needles, and pincers they import.

325 412 Hoes, sickles, adzes, and axes were formerly so made that they could be hafted only to shafts which bent at right angles; in other words, the hafting superficially resembled a Bronze Age technique, especially since the end of such a tool away from the cutting edge was equipped with a socket for the reception of the end of the hafting. In order to make this socket, the implement was constructed as follows: a flat square sheet of iron was ham-

[1] Marmol (chaps. 41. 43. 46) states that iron was extracted in the neighborhood of Melilla and of Megeo, as well as in Beni Said. The first two sites were probably worked, or at least directed, by townspeople, who were not, according to Marmol's own accounts, native Berbers in blood. In Beni Said the mining operations were well organized, and merchants came from as far as Fez to buy iron balls, from which the tools Berbers use were made.

The excellence of the organization of this extinct industry in Beni Said may have been due to Arab or some other non-Riffian inspiration. At the time Marmol wrote the eastern Rif was much more open to outside influences than it has been in later centuries.

[2] Marcus, p. 217 (from Cassiod. Variar. v. 1. Victor Vitensis I, 10).

[2.64]

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325 412 mered out, and then the two sides of it were folded over the central part until they met. This doubled-over sheet was then pounded and forged until the cutting end had become one piece; the separation of the flaps from the main body was exaggerated on the other end, and rounded until a socket fit for the reception of a handle was formed. After this a piece of steel was welded into the cutting end, smoothed, and sharpened. This method of folding and forging, with socket haft, survived until less than a generation ago, when the modern type of hafting, with a hole through the implement at right angles to the long axis, came in. [171] The socket method of hafting with the sides folded over is found today among the tribes of the Congo. It is said that the first smiths to use the modern hafting were the Ulad el Hani of Beni Amart, traditionally Arabs, and that the smiths of Khebaba and of Taghzuth followed them.

325 531 Another similarity to negro technique, besides this method of hafting, is found in the method of ornamenting the handles. A braid of *halfa* or palmetto is sometimes made, and wound about the handle, leaving open spaces in spirals. The handle is then thrown into a fire and taken out before it starts blazing. [171] The braid is then taken off, and a spiral pattern is found burned around the length of the handle. Adzes with this identical form of decoration are found in the Peabody Museum collections from the Congo.

[326] 411 The oldest smiths in the Rif, if we accept tradition, are the craftsmen of Khebaba in the Gzennaya. These Ikhebibsben, as they are called, formerly held the monopoly of dagger-making. The Khebaba daggers, famous throughout the Rif and sold in every market, are long straight blades, well tempered, and sharpened on all of one side and on half of the other. Blood-rills run down the blades; the cross hilts are of bone, as is the major part of the hilt, which is often covered with leather. These keen and effective daggers are encased in scabbards of brass pounded over wood. The designs on the brass, pounded in, are rectilinear and consist mostly of tilted crosses set in squares.

The Khebaba daggers seem to have become scarce about a generation ago, although they are still made in limited quantities and can still be obtained. They were supplanted in general popularity by Senhajan knives from Taghzuth, and by knives from Wezzan, both of these being of one model, slightly curved with the outside sharpened, and equipped with a guardless bone hilt inlaid with brass wire. These knives have in recent years been made in Meknes, and most of the present Riffian daggers are imported from that city, although dagger-making is still carried on by local smiths in each tribe.

326 492 231 The blacksmiths of the Rif leave their shops for two principal purposes, to go to Melilla or Fez for metal, or to go to market, where they shoe horses and mules (see plate 15) and slaughter animals the meat of which is to be sold. The horseshoes and mule shoes which they use were formerly home-made, but at present bear the appearance of European manufacture.

326 563 The second class of metal workers, the Jews, are not found in all the tribes. They live only in that part of the Galiya immediately adjoining Melilla, at Bades, in the tribes of Beni Bu Frah and Mestassa, at Targuist, occasionally at Ajdir, and in the Jebarna section of Gzennaya. Before the rise of Abd el Krim, who set them to work making hand grenades, they seldom dared enter the tribes other than those mentioned, since the appearance of a Jew was traditionally greeted with a volley of stones. Many of them speak no Arabic, conversing only in *thamazighth*, and frequently one finds individuals among them with no apparent Jewish physical characteristics, but able to pass easily as Riffians. Their specialty is the manufacture of brass trays, sugar hammers, silver and pewter brooches, silver finger